DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 355 872 HE 026 309

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TITLE Case Study: Implementing Employment Equity at Carleton University.
PUB DATE 6 Mar 91
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the General Meeting of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (Edmondton, Alberta, Canada, March 6, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Administration; Data Collection; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Personnel Policy; Policy Formation; Program Descriptions; Program Design; *Program Implementation; Unions; Universities
IDENTIFIERS *Carleton University ON

ABSTRACT

Carleton University (Ontario, Canada) has implemented an employment equity plan and has received a federal merit award for this program. The program has involved a concrete investment of time and resources for training, review of employment systems, implementation and monitoring, and ongoing attention at the senior policy level. At the outset the University did extensive planning and developed visible senior-level commitment to the effort. Consultation with unions and employee groups was ongoing. Data were collected in order to allow individuals to identify themselves as members of designated groups. This data collection effort was key to implementing the equity plan. In putting the plan in place a one-time employee census was also taken. Following data analysis, employment systems were reviewed to check for employment barriers which led to a number of changes. Those changes in personnel policy have significantly improved the organizational "climate." Five main elements of the equity plan are numerical objectives, remedies and procedures, a supportive equity environment, responsibility and accountability, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition, Carleton found that the importance of ongoing communications within the University was key to plan success. (JB)

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CASE STUDY: IMPLEMENTING EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY

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Presented at the General Meeting of the
Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

Edmonton, Alberta
March 6, 1991

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CASE STUDY: IMPLEMENTING EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY

I understand that the reason I have been asked to present this Case Study on Carleton University's Employment Equity Program is that our University was one of two organizations that received federal merit awards last Spring in recognition of the employment equity plans we had developed (the other winner was Maritime Paper Products Limited in Halifax). We were pleased with this recognition and I'm happy to share with you some information about the program we have in place and how we developed it, along with some of the lessons we learned in the process. I'm indebted to two of my colleagues (Susan Gottheil, our Employment Equity Co-ordinator and Imelda Mulvihill, the Director of our Office of Planning Analysis and Statistics) for their assistance in preparing this presentation.

The Federal Contractors Program outlines the steps to be followed in implementing employment equity -- conducting a self-identification census, analyzing the internal work-force data and comparing it with the available external labour pool, reviewing the employment systems for systemic barriers, and setting goals and timetables.

In July of 1987 Carleton University signed a Certificate of Commitment to implement Employment Equity as defined by regulations of the Federal Contractors Program. We

were deemed to be in compliance with it in December 1989 (the second Canadian university to do so; the first was the University of Ottawa). This means that we have set goals and timetables -- and we have a commitment to meet them.

What we have come to realize over the past three-and-a-half years is that a commitment to employment equity requires a concrete investment of time and resources: for work-force research and analysis; for training and communicating the organization's interest and commitment to managers, employees, union representatives, and designated group organizations; for review of the employment systems and development of action plans; and for implementation and monitoring. It also requires on-going attention and a serious investment of time and consideration at the senior policy level.

How Did We Begin?

We took the advice CEIC gives in its Guide for Employers. We realized that the success of implementing an employment equity program depends on proper planning and senior-level commitment. Employment equity is not only an essential element of human resource management but also part of a process of planned organizational change. It is always essential to prepare employees and managers for change, particularly when the

proposed changes affect traditional views and working arrangements.

Employment equity is most successful when commitment and support at senior levels are visible and consistent. At Carleton this commitment was demonstrated in a variety of ways, which will become apparent as I describe what we have done. However, four important and visible actions should be noted at the outset:

- We held a seminar on Employment Equity hosted by my predecessor, President William Beckel, in November 1987 to which Deans, Directors, Chairs of Departments and departmental hiring committees, and representatives of each of the six unions affected by the Program were invited. This seminar assembled the 105 University Officers in key positions to implement changes in recruitment and hiring practices in order to acquaint them with the new regulatory requirements. It also sent a clear and public signal to the University community that employment equity has the active support of Carleton's senior management. Speakers at the seminar included representatives of the Federal Contractors Program, the Ontario Ministry

of Colleges and Universities, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The formal presentations of the morning session were followed in the afternoon by panel discussions and question-and-answer sessions.

- Secondly, it is very important that senior management meet regularly to discuss employment equity issues and make decisions to alter current policies and practices that are found to be discriminatory. In November of 1987 President Beckel established an Employment Equity Policy Committee (EEPC) to advise him on policies and procedures to be followed in order to achieve employment equity and pay equity at Carleton. This Committee is, I think, unique among Canadian universities and it serves an essential role in the successful implementation of change that employment equity requires. The Committee has established a senior level of responsibility and supplies a vehicle for employment equity policy formation. Chaired by the Vice-President (Academic), the Committee meets every two weeks and includes the Vice-President (Planning and Development), the Vice-President (Administration),

two representatives of the Committee of Deans, the Director of Personnel, the Assistant Director of Personnel in charge of Staff Relations, the Employment Equity Co-ordinator, the Director of our Office of Planning Analysis and Statistics (who has the responsibility of gathering and analyzing our statistical data), and the Co-ordinator for the Status of Women.

- The third important signal to the University from senior administration was a policy statement that was issued by President Beckel, outlining the University's commitment to employment equity. This statement was distributed to all employees and now appears in the Personnel Policy Manual. It is published twice a year in This Week at Carleton, our weekly newspaper.

- Finally, in August 1988 the University created a senior-level position for an Employment Equity Co-ordinator. This is a full-time, permanent post reporting to the Director of Personnel.

The commitment to employment equity by senior management must be communicated regularly and continually to the University

community. At Carleton, regular communication on employment equity issues and initiatives appears in our newspaper, alumni magazine, and Personnel and union newsletters.

Consultation with Unions and Employee Groups

Carleton is a relatively large university with more than 20,000 full- and part-time students and almost 3,000 full- and part-time employees, most of whom are unionized in six distinct bargaining units, where many of the support mechanisms for the achievement of employment equity -- such as parental leave, child care provisions, and flexible hours -- had already been successfully negotiated by the unions. Our management philosophy, like many of yours, is one of consultation with employees. We believe that in order to develop and implement an effective Employment Equity Program we need the active participation of both senior management and employee representatives. We know that we cannot hope to implement change without the full support, commitment, and participation of those affected. This is why we have continually consulted with them and engaged their active participation -- at first as representatives on our Census Day Task Force and later by the establishment of Employment Equity Parity Committees with each bargaining unit and non-union employee group.

The proposal to establish eight separate committees was deemed necessary as each bargaining unit and employee group is governed by different terms and conditions of work recorded in collective agreements. No changes can be made to current policies or procedures until agreement is negotiated by the parties concerned. Membership on each committee consists of three management representatives and three employee representatives. Because employment equity is considered University work, employees are given time away from their regular duties to prepare for and attend these meetings. Those committees have met regularly since April 1989.

The Employment Equity Parity Committees are responsible for developing employment equity plans for their own employee groups. The terms of reference of each Committee include: analyzing the results of the Employment Equity Census for their unit; comparing the internal work-force data with appropriate external availability data; conducting an in-depth employment systems review of employment policies and practices (including collective agreements); recommending a Plan of Action (including goals and timetables) to be implemented in order to achieve employment equity for their unit; engaging in an information and education program to communicate the importance of employment equity issues and initiatives to their respective constituencies; and monitoring the progress of employment equity for their unit.

Data Collection

There are two convenient points at which individuals may be asked to identify themselves as members of designated groups for employment equity purposes: one opportunity is at the point of application for a job; the other point occurs after the hiring decision, when the individual is part of the employer's work force.

The resources and expertise of Carleton's Office of Planning Analysis and Statistics (OPAS) has been, and continues to be, instrumental to the success of Carleton's Employment Equity Program. The task of collecting and maintaining data on the composition of Carleton's internal work force has been assigned to this Office, which produces the statistical tables on which the University's employment equity work plans (for each bargaining unit and employee group) are based. This Office has developed, and will be responsible for the implementation of, applicant tracking census questionnaires. The Office will be responsible for devising and implementing data collection systems that will permit an analysis of the training, promotion, and termination of designated group employees over time. Its Director sits on each Employment Equity Committee.

I would underline the importance of separating employment equity data collection -- as a process -- from the Personnel line operation, as recommended by provincial and federal Human Rights Commissions. This is not a denigration of Personnel, but a recognition that employees have been conditioned by past practice and legislation to rightfully expect that the employer will not take account of an individual employee's personal attributes (race, colour, ethnic affiliations, or disability) in Personnel decisions. So the separation of these two processes must be complete, we believe.

At Carleton, the first step in developing our Employment Equity Work Plan was taken in November 1988 when an employment equity census of all Carleton employees was conducted. The choice of that time for the work-force census was based on the fact that all of the University's major computerized record systems (student, staff, and faculty) are "frozen" in November of each year to provide the financial and research data base necessary for reports to Ontario's Ministry of Colleges and Universities and Statistics Canada. The week of the 14th provided us with one of the few windows of opportunity after registration and before the examination period.

We established a Census Day Task Force, which included employee and union representatives, to assist in the design of

the census materials and to advise Management on the concerns of employees. The Data Collection Committee, chaired by the Director of our Office of Planning Analysis and Statistics and with input from employee groups, developed the census questionnaire, the methods of data collection, the policy on confidentiality, and the scheduling of activities surrounding the census. This Committee was composed of research, computing, and Personnel staff, as well as the Chair of the Census Day Task Force. It took us two months to design the actual census form, the code of confidentiality, and the procedures for distributing and collecting the census forms. We consulted faculty members whose areas of expertise included questionnaire design as well as ethnic and race relations.

During the Spring and Summer of 1988 we began the lengthy process of consultation with the six unions affected by the Federal Contractors Program (we excluded our teaching and research assistants[1]). Initially a great deal of time and energy was spent on establishing a climate of trust.[2] The concerns of these six very diverse unions needed to be addressed

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[1] We excluded CUPE 2323 members because teaching and research assistants are not recruited from the external labour force. These "workers" must first be registered as students.

[2] The importance of establishing such a climate was brought home to us with the lesson of the CBC Employment Equity initiative -- one of their unions boycotted the self-identification census. The University of Toronto was later threatened with a similar boycott to their census by the Anthropology Department.

thoroughly, and an educational strategy needed to be developed that would be appropriate for such a diverse group. The Census Day Task Force conducted surveys of each employee group and union to ascertain the level of awareness about employment equity and to gauge employee attitudes. This information proved invaluable in shaping the information program and the materials included in the census package.

Our final information program on the census began six weeks prior to the questionnaire distribution with the appearance of the first of two feature articles on employment equity in our University newspaper. It focused on what employment equity means under the regulations of the Federal Contractors Program and the University's participation in the program. This article also included an invitation to members of the University community to submit questions and concerns to a regular column called "Equity Forum". Questions were answered by the appropriate University Officers in that column. This device helped clarify some very basic issues for the entire community. The second feature article, appearing several weeks later, focused on the procedures to be followed in the census. It made clear the voluntary nature of the census, the provisions for confidential returns, and the policies governing the use of information. This second newspaper piece was followed by the general distribution of a brochure in

question-and-answer format on employment equity and the census, entitled "You Asked".

We decided to utilize staff volunteers to distribute (preferably hand-deliver) the census packages. This made it possible for employees to ask questions and raise concerns and, more importantly, to allow co-workers to help with any problems in the readability of the form (problems related to second language, literacy level, and so on). Using a hand-delivery system also allowed us to monitor more carefully the reactions of employees to the census. Census forms were returned to a census co-ordinator in the President's Office, using a double-envelope system to maintain the confidentiality of the response.

Two training sessions for the volunteers were held just prior to census week. These were designed to clarify the procedures to be followed and the policy framework for the census. This approach not only provided a more accurate distribution mechanism (the volunteers were extremely conscientious) but it also helped avoid the impersonal nature of many staff surveys. It set the right tone for the whole undertaking, involving a large number of staff (98 volunteers) and establishing the census as a community effort.

The census returns were gratifying -- 82% overall. Our response rate may have also been augmented by the use of a distinctive logo. It tied the whole census package and all of the related memos together and set them apart in the sea of paper circulating through the University. Not surprisingly, the response rate differed by employee group and union. The highest response rates (89%-92%) were recorded by the Administrative Management, Union-Exempt support staff, and the largest support staff union on campus. Some 76% of the on-campus faculty responded, along with two-thirds of those on sabbatical and leave; and 71% of the trades group responded.

Arrangements have been put in place so that new appointees are sent census packages within one month of their appointment date. We have also begun work on two census forms for job applicants, one for academic appointments and one for support staff appointments. In hindsight, we would suggest designing a different information program for faculty and for tradespeople. In the case of faculty the information program should focus on the historic inequities within higher education, the intersection of employment equity and university self-governance, and the very large amount of business that university faculty conduct with the federal government. The information program for the trades must speak more plainly and directly in human terms, stressing basic fairness as the goal. We found that

of all the employee groups, those in the trades were least sympathetic to the program.

Analyzing the Data

Our excellenct response rate permitted us to determine how many designated group members are employed in various occupations at the University. This work-force profile was possible only after we had translated the University's job titles into Standard Occupational Codes (SOC's) to the four-digit level.[3] This is a time-consuming task, but essential if one is to compare the internal work force with external or "availability" data, which usually refer to external labour-force data -- or numbers of qualified persons available for work -- for a defined geographical recruitment area appropriate for the occupation in question, from which the employer may reasonably be expected to draw. At Carleton, the recruitment area varies from one occupation to another. For example, the recruitment area for faculty is (at least) national, whereas the recruitment area for our maintenance staff is the Ottawa-Hull region.

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[3] The Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) refer to the occupational classification system created by Statistics Canada for use in surveys and for other purposes.

So, after conducting the census we compared Carleton's work force with the broader labour force to see if we were representative or not. There were few surprises: the designated groups are under-represented. (If they were not, of course, there would be no need for employment equity!)

Employment Systems Review

The next important step in the employment equity planning process lies in the review of the employment systems. The aim is to see if we unwittingly have employment barriers that prevent designated group members from being successfully employed. Although policies and practices appear to be fair and are usually applied to everyone, they may adversely affect members of designated groups in unintended ways. For example, are there buildings that are inaccessible for the physically disabled? Are there changerooms and shower facilities for women in blue-collar jobs? Designated group members may not hear about our job opportunities and therefore may not apply to work at the University. We may need to re-think our recruitment strategies.

All types of employment policies and practices must be examined:

- job classification and descriptions

- recruitment processes
- training and development
- promotions and upward mobility
- levels of compensation
- access to benefits
- termination processes
- discipline procedures
- facilities (building design) and access to assistance

Each employment policy and practice must be tested for systemic discrimination and assessed by criteria like:

- Is it job-related?

- Is it valid? Does the test, or required qualification, have a direct relationship to job performance?

- Is it consistently applied?

- Does it have an adverse impact affecting members of designated groups more than those in dominant groups?

- Is it a business necessity?

- Does it conform to human rights and employment standards legislation?

Such reviews have led to a number of provisions that supplement normal enlightened personnel practices and policies in the interest of improving employment equity through recruitment, selection, training, promotion, and conditions of work. For example, in addition to the now typical equity riders in advertisements:

- The Collective Agreement with the faculty contains an affirmative action clause to ensure that qualified female candidates are hired in disciplines where they are currently under-represented.[4] A "Recruitment and Hiring Checklist for Academic Selection Committees" is currently being developed.

- Two of the academic deans have requested that one person on each selection committee in their Faculties be responsible for ensuring that selection and hiring are conducted according to employment equity

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[4] Where two candidates are demonstrably equal, all else being equal, the candidate of the under-represented gender is offered the job.

principles. This has led to an increase in female and native faculty.

- For academic positions, outreach recruitment is undertaken to designated group organizations. A Directory of Sources for Accessing Academically Qualified Candidates from the Four Designated Groups (which includes academic journals and organizations) has been used in faculty recruitment since 1988. We'll soon be instituting an outreach recruitment program for our non-academic positions as well. We have begun our outreach to the community by participating in Job Fairs aimed at the designated groups.

- Non-academic managers and supervisors receive a Staffing Guide for Non-Academic Staff to assist them in ensuring equitable hiring. This guide is currently being revised to provide more explicit assistance in employment equity recruitment and hiring.

- In-house training workshops and courses are offered in such areas as hiring, averting discrimination, time management, supervision, assertiveness, dealing with the public, presentation skills, and stress management. A training program entitled "Supervision for Non-

Supervisors" has been offered since last spring. Workshops dealing with disability awareness, cross-cultural communication, and managing a diverse work force are now in the planning stages.

Initiatives such as these have served to create a positive climate at the University. Ensuring we do not have a "chilly climate" is extremely important because once we hire people we want them to stay and develop with us. We also need to create institutional supports to help the designated groups be successfully employed at the University.

Developing an Employment Equity Plan

When the Federal Contractors Program Compliance Review Officer visits the University, she or he is looking for a bottom line -- an Employment Equity Work Plan. This plan must include five main elements:

1. **Numerical objectives** to increase the representation of the four designated groups by Abella category, across the University. The work-force analysis and review of the employment systems should provide a solid base on which to develop realistic goals and timetables.

2. **Remedies and procedures** which address the specific issues that have been identified. For example:

- When our November 1988 Employment Equity Census was conducted there were only two women employed as patrolpersons in Security Services. Job advertisements were changed to include: "Women are particularly encouraged to apply." There are now six female patrolpersons.

- Although a sexual harassment policy has existed at Carleton since 1984, many women found that it was not very effective. A new policy and set of procedures was recently approved. It calls for two sexual harassment advisors, a human rights educator (who was hired last November), a wider range of options for complainants, a panel of trained mediators, and attention to "hostile environment".

- Pregnant employees who work with VDTs are given the opportunity to have their job duties modified or to be temporarily assigned to another position if they wish.

- A Presidential Advisory Committee on Personal Safety, which includes employee representatives, provides a

forum for staff and students to address issues of personal safety on campus. This Committee has initiated several changes at the University that have enhanced personal safety around the campus, including an After-Hours Courtesy Van Service used by those who require assistance in getting to and from their cars for safety or health reasons, improvement of the lighting in our tunnels, special emergency phones placed in the parking garages, and campus telephones pre-programmed to link users directly to Campus Security at the touch of a button.

- And let's not forget our students. It's difficult to be an equitable employer if there isn't an adequate supply of trained workers from the designated groups. Our achievement of employment equity will depend to a considerable degree on our success in fostering educational equity.

3. Strategies to **create a supportive equity environment.** A number of measures have been instituted to help employees with disabilities and those with family responsibilities -- a special leave of up to 6 days to accommodate these needs, flexible work hours, the opportunity to take reduced-time appointments without the loss of benefits, unpaid leave of

absence of up to one year, and a self-funded leave plan. There are two child-care facilities on campus, and the Status of Women Office also provides employees with a list of day-care facilities off campus.

Special efforts continue to make the Carleton campus one of the best equipped to accommodate physically disabled people -- all campus buildings are connected by tunnel, all of the main buildings have elevators and washrooms equipped for the disabled, sidewalks have been made accessible by curb-cut renovations, stairwells and elevators contain tactile signs for the blind and visually impaired, and physically disabled employees are given special parking spots in lots close to the buildings where their offices are located.

We have a Centre for People with Disabilities, with seven full-time employees, which provides counselling and advocates for employees and students with disabilities. An "Accessibility and Resource Guide" is produced annually for people with disabilities. And of course we provide accommodation and technical aids for any of our disabled employees who need them to perform their jobs.

Women who work in non-traditional jobs often find themselves isolated and facing an uncomfortable work environment. At

Carleton, a support network for these women has been formed. Lunch-hour meetings are held periodically where the women can gather and discuss issues of common concern with the Co-ordinator for the Status of Women and the Employment Equity Co-ordinator.

4. Assignment of clear **responsibility and accountability** for each activity, which is self-explanatory.

5. An outline of **monitoring and evaluation procedures** to be used. We must watch our programs to ensure that results are being achieved and efforts well spent. Monitoring permits us to assess progress toward the goal of a representative work force, determine the effectiveness of equity initiatives, and respond to organizational and environmental changes.

We must also remember that two years after being deemed to be in compliance with the Federal Contractors Program an organization will be subject to another compliance review. We'll be measured not just on our good faith efforts but on whether or not we have achieved the numerical goals we've set for ourselves. A year after establishing our University-wide plan we are already asking ourselves if there are better ways to achieve the desired results and if

the resources assigned to employment equity are sufficient, because we know that we still have a long way to go.

Monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into the employment equity communications strategy. Annual progress reports permit all employees to follow the University's initiatives and achievements. Interim reports on special projects heighten program visibility and acceptance and promote management commitment and accountability.

The importance of on-going communications within the University community cannot, in fact, be overemphasized. As soon as an organization's commitment to implement employment equity is announced, questions are raised about quotas and reverse discrimination. That is, how will employment and promotional opportunities be affected for employees who are not part of designated groups? Designated group members have concerns about how the self-identification questionnaire will affect them individually. Will it actually **hinder** their chances of promotion?

This is why it is key to have a planned series of articles, films, and lunch-hour meetings explaining what employment equity is, the rationale for the program, and its implications for present and future employees. People should be

informed from the beginning of the activities that will be necessary to establish the program -- the work-force analysis, employment systems review, and so on. Employees should be assured that all information provided will be treated confidentially and will not be used to identify individuals other than for the purpose of employment equity program activities.

We have used communications tools on an on-going basis at Carleton -- for example, periodic articles and progress reports in This Week at Carleton, radio interviews, an "Equity Counts" column in the monthly Personnel newsletter, and presentations at breakfast and union meetings. An introduction to the employment equity program is given by the Employment Equity Co-ordinator to each new employee at every Orientation Session and to all academic chairs and directors.

Conclusion

I've stressed a number of important matters that I think we must continually bear in mind: visible senior-level commitment, consultation and working with unions and employee groups, and a continual communications strategy, among others. I would also remind you that if one is to take employment equity seriously -- as I'm convinced we all must -- we have to recognize that the programs and initiatives that make it a success require

an on-going monetary commitment. Employment equity should not be seen as an "add-on" or "frill".

For example, it is all well and good for us to tell departments that they must extend their areas of search and do active outreach recruitment. They may agree it is a wonderful idea. But ads in journals and community-based papers are costly. And we must take increased interview and moving expenses (for successful candidates) into consideration. Another example is establishing central funds to be used for accommodating our disabled employees. The list, of course, goes on.

We've got to remember that our ability to bid on government contracts is contingent on treating employment equity seriously. I'm pleased that we seem to be doing so, but I don't take much pride in my suspicion that it took this governmentally-imposed incentive to get us moving in a direction which now seems so plainly to be right. It also seems to present a unique opportunity. Let's not forget that:

- currently, 70% of all new entrants to the labour force come from one of the four designated groups; in 20 years, this figure will rise to 85%;

- women's increasing participation in the labour force is such that between now and the end of the century, two of every three new workers will be female;

- patterns of immigration to Canada are such that significantly more immigrants to Canada are members of visible minorities; and

- women's increasing participation in higher education has meant that more and more qualified women are available as university teachers and researchers.

With over 50% of our current faculty complement due to retire in the next 15 years, the Federal Contractors Program moves us toward a planned response to these changing employment circumstances and as universities we are in the unique position, through educational equity, of shaping the supply to help meet our own demand. We need to grab this opportunity while we can.

At any rate, we're getting into it "boots and all" and it's a heck of a big job. I hope I've helped a bit with it by telling you some of what we've done and learned at Carleton, and I'd be delighted to get your suggestions on how it might be improved.